15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
Oll7 Murngin Oll7

were adorned with clay, string, and fur, and in consequence this form of decoration is still used here, whereas to the east of Castlereagh Bay strikingly beautiful decorations are made with red and green parrot feathers.

Two old Men who were sitting by their fish traps, saw the Women, and said: 'What Women are these?' Self-consciously both Men and Junkgowa Women wound string round their waists and snatched green twigs for pubic shields. Later the Men invited the Women to share their camp: 'Come over here,' they said, 'we have plenty of fish.' As they approached the camp, the Women noticed that their Junkgowa dialect had undergone a subtle change, for they were unconsciously adopting the dialect of the fishermen. For many moons the Ancestresses ate fish from the fish traps, which are still a pronounced feature in aboriginal life on the salt plains. They taught the Men new songs and dances and sent out their offspring with totems and stone implements to found hordes. But beckoning smoke again rose in the west, and the Ancestresses left the Men to their fish traps.

From this point the account of their wanderings is vague, for they reached the borders of a new group of hordes which have their own creation myths, beliefs, customs, and language. Nevertheless, my informers emphatically asserted that, although these western 'foreigners' are self-contained and have no intercourse eastward, they were created by the Junkgowa. My guides had previously skirted the 'foreign' west country in canoes and pearling luggers, and when they noticed any features such as the sand dunes at Hall's Point and nearby food swamps they claimed them as the work of the Junkgowa.

Still farther to the west, some five hundred miles from their original landing at Port Bradshaw, the Women came to the open sea at Cape Don. They were perplexed by the sight of the sea barring their way, and scratched their heads, and threw the lice into the sea. But the lice

15:Channeling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
OII7 Murngin OII7

immediately emerged in the form of Melville and Bathurst Islands. The Women then made rafts from sheets of paper-bark, drove digging sticks through the sheets to keep them in place, and loaded their few remaining possessions on top. They swam behind these and crossed the eighteen-mile-wide Dundas Strait to Melville Island, and by this method aboriginal women today cross creeks and rivers.

Aboriginals on Melville and Bathurst Islands form a distinct social group and have no intercourse with the adjacent mainland. Nevertheless, Yulengor five hundred miles eastward maintain that their Junkgowa went to these islands and there distributed nomads, totems, and animals. One old man told me (and what he said is accepted generally) that he went to Bathurst Island on a pearling lugger, and in the customary exchange of sacred lore with the islanders they showed him their totemic water-hole, which, they said, was inhabited by two grotesque mythical beings. These creatures had the tails and bodies of snakes, but the heads of men. That was enough for the visitor; although he did not enlighten his hosts, he went back to his own people, and said: 'I know our Junkgowa are there.'